



## BRIEFING STATEMENT

# BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

HILINE DISTRICT • 1101 15TH ST NORTH • GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59403 • [WWW.BLM.GOV/MT](http://WWW.BLM.GOV/MT)

March 19, 2012

### **SUBJECT: HILINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The BLM has nearly completed the Draft HiLine Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Draft RMP/EIS). The HiLine RMP will direct the long-term management on about 2.4 million acres of surface and 3.8 million acres of federal mineral estate within eight counties of north central Montana. These lands and minerals are managed by the Havre, Malta, Glasgow, and Great Falls field offices and occur in Valley, Phillips, Blaine, Toole, Liberty, Chouteau, Hill, and Glacier counties.

Key issues addressed in the plan are renewable and traditional energy development; management of solid minerals; soil and vegetation management; land tenure; access; off-highway vehicles; wildlife habitat and special status species; cultural and paleontological resources; special designations and management areas; wildfire and prescribed fire management; and social and economic conditions across the HiLine.

#### **II. BACKGROUND**

Collaborative planning continues with local, state, federal, and tribal governments and land management agencies. The cooperating agencies assisting in the development of the HiLine RMP include the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Bureau of Reclamation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Blaine, Phillips and Valley counties; and eight grazing districts.

Five alternatives will be presented and analyzed in the HiLine Draft RMP/EIS which will be distributed to the public for a 90-day comment period in the fall of 2012. Concurrent with the public comment period, the BLM will host public meetings across the HiLine.

To date, we have met with tribal representatives from the Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy's, Fort Peck, Flathead and Blackfeet reservations to discuss the draft RMP/EIS. Additional briefings with tribal governments will be scheduled once the draft RMP/EIS is released to the public.

#### **III. POSITION of INTERESTED PARTIES**

Public interest will remain high because of management proposals for energy development, special status species including greater sage-grouse, off-highway vehicle use, traditional cultural properties, and special management areas.

The HiLine District recently completed updating its inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics and several areas were determined to have wilderness characteristics. How the BLM proposes to manage these lands will be of great interest to local communities, state recreationists, and national wilderness advocacy groups.